

I claim:

1. A method to provide for fail-safe operation in a virtual switch, the method comprising:

- 5 (a) identifying a first switching device with a primary configuration management module (CMM), the first switching device being one of a plurality of switching devices in a system of switching devices, wherein the switching devices of the system are linked via a full duplex ring;
- (b) identifying a second switching device with a secondary CMM, the second  
10 switching device being one of the plurality of switching devices in the system;
- (c) identifying one or more additional switching devices operatively linked within the system of switching devices, wherein one or more of the additional switching devices comprises a CMM;
- (d) soliciting configuration information updates from the second switching device  
15 and additional switching devices;
- (e) storing the configuration information acquired by means of the configuration information updates in the primary switching device; and
- (f) synchronizing the stored configuration information at the first switching device  
20 with a duplicate configuration information store at the second switching device.